drivers, is flourishing in this area by dodging these girls into marriage and bringing them from poor and remote areas;

(c) the number of such cases for which action has been taken so far by the administration; and

(d) the steps proposed to be taken by Government to check this illegal and inhuman trade?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) to (c) As per information received from Government of Haryana, there is no such incident in the district.

(d) As far as Ministry of Women and Child Development is concerned, the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 (ITPA) supplemented by the Indian Penal Code prohibits trafficking in human beings including children for purpose of prostitution and lays down severe penalties for traffickers. The ITPA is now being further amended providing for more stringent punishment for trafficking in persons including children. The Ministry of Women and Child Development conducts advocacy, awareness generation, sensitization programme for prevention of child trafficking.

Marriage of minor girls

2255. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:
SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN:
SHRI MAHMOOD A. MADANI:

Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government agree with the findings of the National Family Health Survey-III, that marriage of minor girls is still rampant in several States;

(b) if not, whether Government have conveyed its views to the organization, which conducted the Survey and the response thereto;

(c) if so, the details of such States with high prevalence of such marriage of minor children;

(d) whether it is a fact that such marriages are illegal; and

(e) if so, the steps being taken by Government to immediately stop such practice?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) to (c) As per National Family Health Survey-III (NFHS-III) nearly 45% of women in the country, aged between 20 and 24, were married off before the age of 18 years. Percentage of cases occurring in States like Bihar (67%), Jharkhand (61%), Rajasthan (57%), Andhra Pradesh (55%), Madhya Pradesh (53%), Uttar Pradesh (53%), West Bengal (53%) and Chhattisgarh (52%) reflect a high incidence of girls married below 18 years.

(d) and (e) In order to prohibit child marriages and to make the provisions of the Act more effective and punishment more stringent for offenders, a new legislation "The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006" (No. 6 of 2007) has been enacted and notified in the Gazette of India on 11th January, 2007. Also, awareness generation and advocacy measures are continuously being undertaken by the Ministry of Women and Child Development in this connection.

Objective of NORAD Scheme

2256. SHRI BALAVANT *ALIAS* BALAPTE:
SHRI SHREEGOPAL VYAS:

Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the objective of Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) Scheme;

(b) the number of NGOs which have been allocated fund under NORAD scheme during each of the last three years, State-wise and NGO-wise;

(c) whether Government has made any assessment of the performance of such NGOs; and

(d) if so, the action taken by Government against the NGOs whose performance was found unsatisfactory?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) Swawlamban